

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A composition comprising astaxanthin, wherein the composition is adapted for use by a companion animal.
2. The composition according to Claim 1 comprising less than about 3% of astaxanthin, by weight of the composition.
3. The composition according to Claim 2 wherein the composition is a nutritionally balanced pet food composition.
4. The composition according to Claim 3 comprising from about 0.0001% to about 2% of astaxanthin, by weight of the composition.
5. The composition according to Claim 4 which is selected from the group consisting of dog food compositions, cat food compositions, and combinations thereof.
6. The composition according to Claim 5 comprising from about 0.001% to about 1% of astaxanthin, by weight of the composition.
7. The composition according to Claim 6 comprising from about 0.001% to about 0.5% of astaxanthin, by weight of the composition.
8. The composition according to Claim 2 wherein the composition is a supplement.
9. The composition according to Claim 8 comprising from about 0.0001% to about 2% of astaxanthin, by weight of the composition.
10. A method selected from the group consisting of attenuating inflammation, enhancing immunity, enhancing longevity, and combinations thereof, comprising administering to a companion animal a composition comprising an effective amount of astaxanthin.
11. The method according to Claim 10 comprising administering to the companion animal from about 0.001 mg to about 40 mg, daily, of astaxanthin to the companion animal.

12. The method according to Claim 11 wherein the immune response is a cell-mediated immune response.
13. The method according to Claim 11 wherein the immune response is a humoral immune response.
14. The method according to Claim 11 wherein the companion animal is a domestic dog.
15. The method according to Claim 14 wherein from about 1 mg to about 40 mg, daily, of astaxanthin is administered to the domestic dog.
16. The method according to Claim 11 wherein the companion animal is a domestic cat.
17. The method according to Claim 16 wherein from about 0.001 mg to about 10 mg, daily, of astaxanthin is administered to the domestic cat.